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CICS

(Customer Information Control System) A TP monitor from IBM that was originally developed to provide transaction processing for IBM mainframes. It controls the interaction between applications and users and lets programmers develop screen displays without detailed knowledge of the terminals used. It provides terminal routing, password security, transaction logging for error recovery and activity journals for performance analysis.

CICS has also been made available on non-mainframe platforms including the RS/6000, AS/400 and OS/2-based PCs.

CICS commands are written along with and into the source code of the applications, typically COBOL, although assembly language, PL/I and RPG are also used. CICS implements SNA layers 4, 5 and 6.

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TP monitor

(TeleProcessing monitor or Transaction Processing monitor) A control program that manages the transfer of data between multiple local and remote terminals and the application programs that serve them. It may also include programs that format the terminal screens and validate the data entered.

In a distributed client/server environment, a TP monitor provides integrity by ensuring that transactions do not get lost or damaged. It may be placed in a separate machine and used to balance the load between clients and various application servers and database servers. It is also used to create a high availability system by switching a failed transaction to another machine. A TP monitor guarantees that all databases are updated from a single transaction (see [two-phase commit](#)).

Examples of popular TP monitors are CICS, a veteran TP monitor used on IBM mainframes and the Unix-based Tuxedo and Encina products. See [BEA Tuxedo](#) and [Encina](#).

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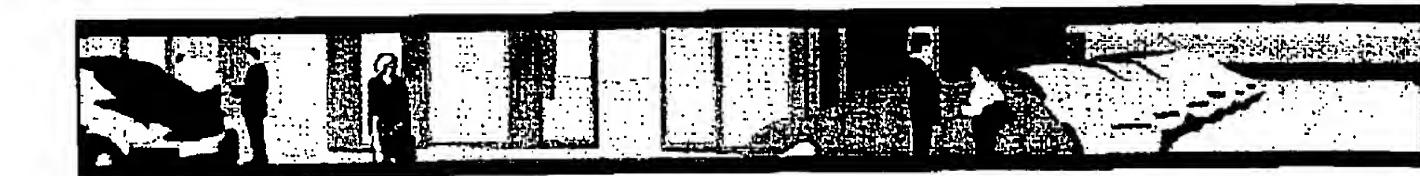
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(Systems Network Architecture) IBM's mainframe network standards introduced in 1974. Originally a centralized architecture with a host computer controlling many terminals, enhancements, such as APPN and APPC (LU 8.2), have adapted SNA to today's peer-to-peer communications and distributed computing environment. Following are some of SNA's basic concepts.

Nodes and Data Links

In SNA, nodes are end points or junctions, and data links are the pathways between them. Nodes are defined as Type 5 (hosts), Type 4 (communications controllers) and Type 2 (peripheral; terminals, PCs and midrange computers).

Type 2.0 nodes can communicate only with the host, and Type 2.1 nodes can communicate with other 2.1 nodes (peer-to-peer) without going to the host.

Data links include high-speed local channels, the SDLC data link protocol and Token Ring.

SSCPs, PUs and LUs

The heart of a mainframe-based SNA network is the SSCP (System Services Control Point) software that resides in the host. It manages all resources in its domain.

Within all nodes of an SNA network, except for Type 2.1, there is PU (Physical Unit) software that manages node resources, such as data links, and controls the transmission of network management information. In Node Type 2.1, Control Point software performs these functions.

In order to communicate user data, a session path is created between two end points, or LUs (Logical Units). When a session takes place, an LU-LU session is established between an LU in the host (CICS, TSO, user application, etc.) and an LU in the terminal controller or PC.

An LU 6.2 session provides peer-to-peer communication and lets either side initiate the session.

VTAM and NCP

VTAM (Virtual Telecommunications Access Method) resides in the host and contains the SSCP, the PU for the host, and establishes the LU sessions within the host.

NCP (Network Control Program) resides in the communications controller (front end processor) and manages the routing and data link protocols, such as SDLC and Token Ring.

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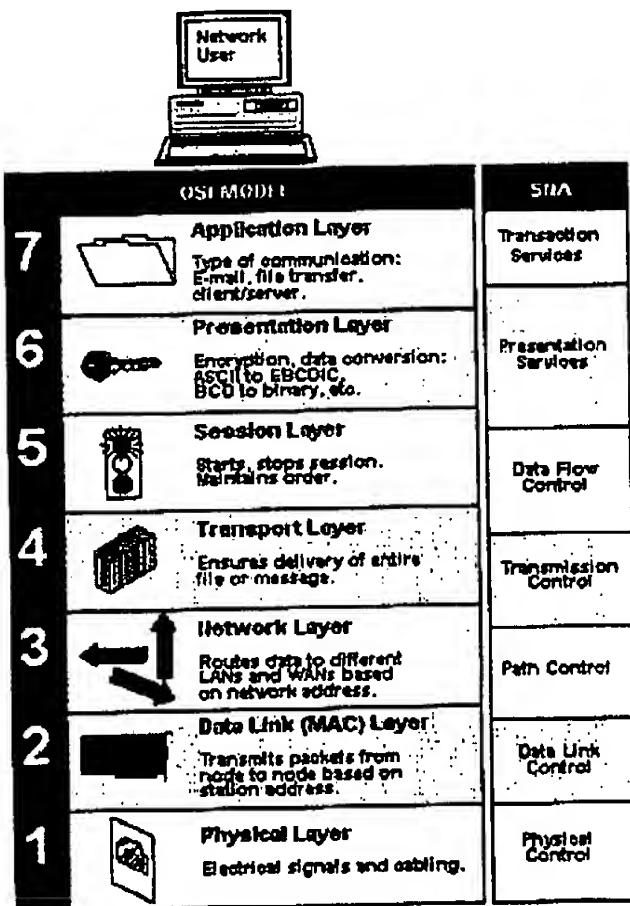
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SNA Layers

SNA is implemented in functional layers starting with the application that triggers the communications down to the bottom layers which transmit packets from station to station. This layering is called a "protocol stack." The SNA stack is compared with the OSI model below. Although SNA had major influence on the OSI model, there are differences in implementation.

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